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opinion, the most dangerous attacks to which this system is exposed. The effect of these absurd pretensions, and empty menaces, is to excite disgust rather than alarm, and by a natural reaction, to defeat the purposes of their authors. A much more plausible and politic mode of attack upon the tariff, is the one which was pursued with partial success at the last session of Congress, and will doubtless be followed up at future ones, founded in the old Machiavelian principle, *divide and conquer*. By addressing successively their sectional interests, it is hoped, that portions of the friends of the protecting policy may be induced to combine with its enemies for the repeal of particular articles of the law, until the whole shall be finally destroyed in detail. The nature of this plan of attack and the motives which have led to its adoption, are very fairly avowed in the speeches and writings of those who propose to act upon it, so that there can be no pretence of mistake on the subject. If the friends of the American System have not the firmness to resist the allurements of the bait thus held out to them, they will at least have the satisfaction of going into the trap with their eyes open, and a full knowledge of the consequences. We take for granted, however, that the majority of an American Congress will not be very readily duped by so simple a stratagem—that they will see and feel that their only safety is in union, and will rally with unbroken unanimity, without regard to any temptation of apparent personal or sectional advantage, round the standard of the principles and interests common to them all. Should this be the case, we can venture to assure them beforehand of a decided victory.

ART. VII.—*The History of the Rise and Progress of the United States of North America till the British Revolution in 1688.* By JAMES GRAHAME, Esq. In two Volumes. London. 1827.

In this country, and more particularly in this section of it, we are fond of celebrating the virtues of our forefathers. We delight to honor their memory by festive anniversaries and eloquent panegyric. Yet it is much to be feared, that this is not the right way to come at that real history, and those cool and rational conclusions, which can alone be supposed likely to confer permanent benefit. Orators are necessarily obliged to

excite their hearers. Mere reasoning will not suffice. They must mingle spices in their dish. Yet when a people become accustomed to such rich substances, there is danger that they may reject more natural food. The taste must be totally unvitiated, to relish much of the graver historical sketches of our early times ; for it may candidly be admitted, now that the case is altered, that heretofore dulness has shed her sleepy influence upon pages calculated to convey a lesson of real utility to our country and mankind.

The public, as a body, feels and talks, long before it takes the trouble to think. A process of reasoning, let it be ever so good, is an intellectual effort which few will be at the pains of appreciating, when the same result can be sooner arrived at through the medium of the passions. If this were not true, we should be puzzled to account for the fact, that, with all the apparent enthusiasm upon the subject, a book like Mr. Grahame's should have been published three years, and its merits still remain to be understood in America. The only attempt within our knowledge in a member of the old country to examine thoroughly and consider candidly the phenomena of our early history, has been neglected in a manner which might fairly authorize the inference, that, with all our noise, we really care little about the merits of the matter. Not that we admit the soundness of such an inference. The causes of this state of things must be found elsewhere.

The work at the head of these remarks has (so far as we are informed) met with little notice in the parent country ; and this is probably one of the reasons why it has been overlooked here. It is yet too much the case with our reading world, that we are apt to form our opinions of the merit of books from the notice they receive in the leading English periodical publications. A newspaper advertisement always contains extracts from the reviews, inserted by re-publishers of works here, as a kind of certificate of value, to help the sales. Independence in matters of literature seems little aimed at or encouraged ; and, however different the views of things should be when seen through an American medium, they are, in fact, generally in accordance with the positive assertions, roundly and familiarly dealt to us from across the water. Few subjects of a political or historical nature exist, upon which our system of government and civil institutions would not naturally lead us into a train of sentiment somewhat different from that en-

tertained upon the same subjects in England. Every day loosens more and more any ties, which may once have closely connected us. In any attempt, therefore, to follow in the path they mark out, we necessarily must wander widely from that which we should properly pursue. If we err in submitting to such an influence upon subjects of ordinary interest common to us both, how much more must we do so, when acting upon such as belong more intimately to us. If we draw our notions of the value of our history, or indeed of any thing belonging to us, from the manner in which such matters are commonly treated in England, those notions will certainly be false and injurious to ourselves. The fact is, that the whole subject of North America carries with it an uncommonly disagreeable association of ideas to British minds. Whenever this particular topic suggests itself, it seems to be the signal for the decline of liberality, the rise of prejudice, and sometimes, though not so much latterly, even of ignorance.

Under all these circumstances, we cannot feel surprised, that a book like this has been neglected. In England the subject is not now, nor was it ever, popular. The matter contains testimony the more valuable to us, as it is so rare, to the character of a class of persons never properly esteemed there. Besides, it corrects much of the erroneous and unjust matter which has heretofore issued from the British press. With an apparent desire to be above prejudice, with industry equal to a thorough investigation of facts, and with a spirit able to appreciate the value of his subject, Mr. Grahame has published what we conceive to be the best book that has any where appeared, upon the early history of the United States. He has corrected, with a proper boldness, the mistakes, whether of ignorance or malignity, which his predecessors in the same labors had committed.

Of these, Dr. Robertson is here entitled to particular notice. The popularity of his style, and *apparent* candor of his mind, render all his works extremely interesting to the mass of readers, who seek for amusement and instruction without fatigue. The ninth and tenth books of the *History of America*, the only ones which refer to these States, were not published during his life, and have since appeared only as a carefully composed fragment. At the time when he was writing them, the disturbances between the mother country and her colonies had brought matters to a crisis; the countries had plunged into the war which terminated

in their separation, and with this event, the Doctor seems to have lost his taste for the employment, and the disposition to perfect it. In other words, the subject was no longer popular in England. In a letter to Strahan, written about that time, he declares that he thinks it lucky his History was not finished before these events occurred, because the result would have been destructive to many plausible theories, he should have felt entitled to form.* That these theories proceeded from feelings somewhat involved in the success of his own country, seems likely, from the tone of a subsequent letter to the same individual. If so, it is not at all probable, that an examination of our early records would have tended much to sooth his irritation. But whether so or not, we cannot regret that he never finished his undertaking. We do not believe that Dr. Robertson was qualified for the task. The same character and cherished opinions which led him to justify Mary of Scotland, led him to undervalue the whole class of her opponents, the Puritans. He was, moreover, studious of the popular taste, and not over thorough in his researches after facts. We often meet with superficial observations and unwarranted conclusions, though these defects are so nicely shaded by the general philanthropy and elegant smoothness of his pages, as to elude ordinary observation. The modern fashion of what is called philosophical history is attended with one great disadvantage, in the ease with which it admits of the perversion of facts, to suit the prejudices of each particular writer. From such prejudices, Dr. Robertson was by no means free. They made him slow to appreciate the virtues, and quick to detect the foibles of our fathers, and occasionally to overlook altogether many circumstances, very important to an accurate conception of their character.

To illustrate this, we might turn to almost any page of the tenth book. But not to multiply citations, we shall select, for its importance, that in which he treats of the motives of the founders of Plymouth, in leaving Holland to come to these Western shores—motives, a correct idea of which, as all readers must admit, lies at the very bottom of a just opinion of the men, and gives its tone to all their subsequent history.

‘There,’ (in Holland,) ‘these Puritans resided for several years unmolested and obscure. But many of their aged members dying,

* Dugald Stewart’s Life of Dr. Robertson, prefixed to the History of Scotland.

and some of the younger marrying into Dutch families, while their church received no increase, either by recruits from England or by proselytes gained in this country, *they began to be afraid that all their high attainments in spiritual knowledge would be lost*, and that perfect fabric of policy which they had erected, would be dissolved and consigned to oblivion, if they remained longer in a strange land.

'*Deeply affected with the prospect of an event, which to them appeared fatal to the interests of truth*, they thought themselves called, in order to prevent it, to remove to some other place, where they might profess and propagate their opinions with greater success.' *Hist. of Amer.* vol. iv. p. 262.

Now it seems to us not a little strange, that, from a list of five good reasons assigned for their removal, Dr. Robertson has selected but one ; and that, the one least likely to excite the sympathy of the reader, and has given to his version the additional point of a sneer. Of the others, not a syllable is said. They are all plainly but touchingly given in their own church records.* The singularity of a statement like the preceding induced us to examine the authority, which is as follows.

'In 1617, they began to think of removing to America. *They laid great stress upon their peculiar tenets, but this did not lessen their regard to morality. The manners of the Dutch were too licentious for them.* Their children left them, some became soldiers, and others sailors, in the Dutch service. In a few years, *their posterity would have been Dutch, and their church extinct.* They were at a loss whether to remove to Guiana or to Virginia ; but the majority were in favor of the latter. The Dutch labored to persuade them to go to Hudson's river, and settle under their West India Company; but *they had not lost their affection for the English*, and chose to be under their government and protection.' *Hutchinson's Hist. of Mass.* vol. i. p. 11.

Mr. Grahame has explained the matter still better ; but the facts appear clearly enough without further quotation. It seems, then, that attachment to their religious belief, regard for the moral condition of their children, and an affection still warm for the good institutions of their native country, combined to lead these Pilgrims to New England ; motives, than which, in the whole circle of human feelings, none could be selected more reasonable, none more honorable to themselves. We may learn from specimens like these, that a historian cannot

* Hazard's State Papers, vol. i. p. 357 ; Morton's Mem. p. 19.

be too much alive to the importance of giving, not the truth only, but the *whole* truth; not the truth with a veil, but the plain, naked truth.

But, however negligent or prejudiced Dr. Robertson may have been, we do not mean to charge him with wilful, malignant misinterpretation. He seems to have had no particular end in view. We fear that so much cannot be said for Mr. George Chalmers, who published his *Annals of the Colonies* somewhat earlier. This gentleman, driven from Maryland by the storm of the revolution, returned to his own country full of the feelings, which the cause of his departure might naturally be supposed to occasion, and which were far from likely to ensure for the labors he undertook, that impartiality by which such works should always be distinguished. The result did not disappoint the probability. His book is a labored and yet a lame apology for the royal cause, with a due proportion of abuse and illiberality towards America. On the other hand, it must be admitted, that his sources of original information were extensive, and that he used them industriously; so that his work is valuable to us, if considered with reference to the facts, and apart from his fallacious commentary. But *he* merits no mercy at the hands of Americans. We may smile when he tells us, ‘that, among other deplorable ills, the American climate seems always to have begotten a propensity to disobedience;’* we may laugh at the enthusiasm, which should so far blind a man, that in the book which tells of the sufferings of the Pilgrims in exile for conscience’ sake, he should introduce ‘clemency as the *peculiar* characteristic of kings;’* but we can feel nothing less than the sternest indignation, when we reflect that he used the most authentic materials of our colonial history to serve the interests of a day. Such an act, if luckily it did not partially carry its own antidote, would be ruinous to every thing like justice. It is perverting the first principles of eternal truth to accomplish the purposes of party.

We have seized this occasion to notice these authors, because we consider most of the injurious impressions respecting our early history to be owing to them. The popular style of the former has brought his work into the hands of all readers, as the authentic materials supplied by the other have introduced him to all the writers in the community. Most of the subsequent authors appear to have implicitly followed their track.

* Chalmers’ Pol. Ann. p. 18. 191.

Mr. Grahame, however, has judiciously adopted a different course, and, by searching for himself, has probed the weak places of all preceding writers. We do not mean to say, that he has invariably avoided error; but that he has coped very successfully with the disadvantages of his situation. His mistakes occur, in allusions to habits and customs which he cannot know. They are such as might be expected from every stranger not acquainted with us by personal observation, who, the moment he leaves his books, loses his only undeviating guides. But this defect is trifling, when compared with the happy discrimination which he has manifested in the selection of the leading principles that led to the colonization of the several States, and with the able exposition of the results that followed. On the whole, we strongly recommend this work to every American, to be read, reflected on, and compared with others. We perceive by the Preface, that the author promises two more works which are to comprehend the rest of our history, and sincerely hope that they may prove equally good, and thus furnish us with what is much needed, a connected and philosophical sketch, which shall be at once entertaining, instructive, and correct.

It is of course impossible for us to notice particularly, on the present occasion, all the subjects that are treated in the work before us. The Catholic settlement of Maryland, the history of William Penn, and the experiment of government on the philosophical principles of Locke in Carolina, deserve the deepest attention from the student of History, as well on account of the striking peculiarities belonging to each, as of the contrast they present to one another. North America seems to have been the stage for experiments in all kinds of popular government, and if that which we now enjoy have any eminent advantages, it is fair and rational to conclude, that it is the result of reflection and various experience, of wisdom refined by time and trial. We must, however, reserve what we have to say upon these subjects to some opportunity which our author may hereafter present, and proceed now to treat of a single portion, which, as well for the large share it has in the volumes before us as for the superior interest it creates *here*, appears to merit a more particular consideration. Besides, the lapse of the second century since the settlement of Massachusetts, seems to present a seasonable opportunity to look back calmly, and weigh the causes which gave rise to it, the principles

which afterwards sustained it, and the influence it is exerting at the present day. From reflections which views of this kind may create, great practical good may come. They will lead us more fully to appreciate the qualities, which carried our ancestors through seasons of infinite suffering. They will teach us, that we owe to them every thing we now regard as best worth possessing; and by impressing this fact more stedfastly upon our minds, they may induce us to adhere firmly to those principles, which, as they sustained them, will also sustain us, under every trial, and throughout all time. Lastly, they may conduct us to the knowledge of the only true sources of all national prosperity, which it is essential to understand, or our system must certainly fall.

We have seen how unceremoniously Dr. Robertson despatches the motives, which brought the first Colony to Plymouth; and we then took the liberty to suggest the importance of a true notion of them to an understanding of all our subsequent history. Without it, we are blind to the chain of moral effects which has since been so fully carried out. In a brief sketch, it is impossible to dwell minutely upon the circumstances in which this may be fully traced. We must confine ourselves to leading suggestions, and where description would be likely to fail in giving a clear idea, resort must be had to the power of contrast. Thus, by comparing the infancy of the contemporary Colony of Virginia with that of Massachusetts and New-England, we may get more fully to realize the very remarkable points peculiar to the latter. We attempt this with no invidious design towards Virginia. That Colony is selected only because it arose about the same time, and will stand as a fair example of all establishments formed upon similar principles.

Virginia was colonized under the patronage of a King—by a company in London—for purposes of *gain*. James played the part of legislator, and the first effort of his protecting care deprived all the settlers of their natural rights as Englishmen, by subjecting them to power, without any voice in its regulation. Under such auspices the Colony arose. As the intention of the company was to profit by trade and not to colonize, the persons sent looked more for the means of growing suddenly rich and returning, than for a permanent domicile on the western side of the ocean. With them came a few volunteers, the romantic adventurers common in that age, who sought, in the new country made famous by the Spaniards for adventure, a

field for short and wild enterprise, rather than the slow but certain result of patient worldly management. This stock was occasionally supplied by numbers, whose value may be easily estimated when we say, that they were gentlemen, refiners, goldsmiths and jewellers, attracted thither in quest of dross, which they were ever eagerly seeking, when they should have been thinking of the means of subsistence. The spirit which grew out of this was of course essentially selfish, and as the individuals of this society had come, united by no common ties, and immediately scattered without government, the natural consequences, anarchy and confusion, ensued. At a most critical moment, the existence of the Colony was preserved by the wisdom and energy of a single individual, whose natural ascendancy over his companions supplied the bonds requisite to keep them together. Captain Smith is a hero of romance, but with more common sense than these personages are usually gifted with. He is fairly entitled to the name of the Founder of Virginia. An accident forced him to return to England, where the company manifested their sense of his services by total neglect; and thus held out very fitting encouragement for laudable exertion. The truth is, that they did not intend to colonize; they wanted agents to trade; and, provided this was managed to advantage, they were little solicitous of the prosperity of the people. No sooner had Smith departed than the settlement declined. Its destruction by the hands of the Indians was avoided only by resorting to the rigor of martial law. Severity saved what unrestrained liberty was fast destroying. Then came the military government of Dale, the violent death of the London Corporation, the grinding tyranny of Hussey, their royal Governor. They had no season of repose or prosperity until the paternal government of Sir William Berkeley came to their relief—a man who, by his personal popularity, secured a higher degree of favor from the planters to his master, than the tenor of his administration would have otherwise deserved. The people had few rights, their spirit was loyalist, and their character may be understood when their best Governor is found, like a true Cavalier, ‘to thank God, there are no schools nor printing.’ Whether a spirit of rational liberty prompted the movement of Bacon in his rebellion, or more selfish motives, he died too early for us to decide unequivocally; the probability inclines, however, to the latter opinion. On the whole, it seems tolerably clear, that the knowledge of true freedom came late,

and grew slowly. It found its nourishment among the planters, from tyranny and oppression, which checked their prosperity and insulted their patience. How this knowledge, gathered in bitterness and long suffering, finally burst forth in a blaze, enlightening every hill and valley of the continent, we all know ; but we find in the earlier days little cause to ascribe its rise to any principle existing in the primary formation of the State.

New-England, on the other hand, was planted by a colony composed of the middling classes in the mother country, opposed to the power of the crown—for the sake of *religious principle*, though the love of rational freedom was always combined with it. The very first act of the settlers of Plymouth was a written agreement, signed by every person, to form a civil society—a close approximation to the theory of the social compact. The transfer of the Charter to Massachusetts, virtually the same thing on their part, we shall speak of hereafter. Both measures manifest most clearly the sense which the members had of the obligations imposed upon them. They also show the principles of independence which they held from the first, and upon which their subsequent government was framed. Let it be recollected, then, that the duties were *self-imposed*, and, so far as we can judge, obeyed, without the agency of any extraordinary individual influence. In a desert, every man is entitled to a share of credit for wisely submitting himself to government where temptations always exist to swerve. We shall see that the first Church made it one of their fundamental points to obey the rulers set over them, so as to encourage them in the performance of their duty ; a valuable though rather unusual branch of Church discipline. On such a foundation was the superstructure laid, and so happily did it rise, that its beautiful proportions were gradually developed without confusion, and with little adversity to record. The principle of government was popular, in its widest reasonable extent. The settlers belonged to a class of Christians, to whom the world stands indebted for the preservation of all the principles of liberty, which are now so flourishing. According to the testimony of a historian, never too favorable to their habits or character, theirs is the credit of preserving the freedom of the British Constitution. That freedom might have been crushed beyond revival by the power of the Stuarts, had not the love of it been combined in the hearts of these men with a still more exalted feeling, an attachment to religion, which led them to endure and to condemn every ill

that was of this world. Driven to resistance, the Puritans discovered their power, and used it with effect. The old system fell before them. The experiment of a simple government was made, but too many obstacles existed to authorize the least hope of success. The angry passions had rioted too long. But the fixed habits of the nation, the distinct orders, keeping up great inequalities in society and wealth, the active party of the exiled royal family, and above all, the ambition of their own leaders corrupted by good fortune, were the principal obstacles to a fair trial. The plan failed—a reaction ensued, which brought back in triumph Charles and his House. The age of licentiousness succeeded, but the spirit which had once come to the knowledge of its own strength, could not be subdued—though foiled, perhaps forever, in its original purpose, it yet lived to form what is at this day the main support and glory of the British people—the Constitution of 1688.

Far different were the circumstances of that portion of the sect, who brought the same principles with them to America—and far different with them was the issue. They were free from the shackles, which tied down their brethren at home; they had no time-hallowed institutions to contend with; the ground was not encumbered with ruins dangerous to build upon, yet difficult to remove; they had it free and open before them to mark it to their taste. They did mark it with an eye of practical wisdom, which was not exhibited by a philosopher of far higher pretensions, John Locke, in a similar undertaking. His plan vanished at the rude touch of common life like a dream; theirs stands the test of centuries, for the institutions they founded are well known as that system, under which, with little variation, their posterity have ever since existed.

We have thus endeavored to illustrate the peculiarity, which governed the settlement of New-England, by contrasting it with that of a Colony founded for mere commercial purposes; but we cannot here resist the temptation to leave the thread of our subject, in order to remark upon a feature of the Puritan character, which has been to their enemies and those of New-England, a favorite and fertile source of reproach. We have been told of the intolerance of the early settlers—and forthwith has issued a series of sweeping reflections from such as seek in the common-places of morals for a cover to malignity or a display of depth. We are not disposed at this time, or ever, to be the advocates of intolerance. We grant that it

is generally a mistake, as well as a crime. We will go so far as to admit, that our fathers were over-inclined to it—but if we see undue advantage taken of general admissions like these, to point a malicious moral, or to affix a stigma where none is deserved,—if we see our own writers copy without qualification, a charge so ungenerously made,—we feel disposed to retract our frankness, and be wise enough to leave to the attacking party the whole burden of proof, while we hold ourselves ready to put in a denial, or a justification. In truth, we apprehend that this charge has been much misunderstood, and in order to set it upon its true foundation, we propose briefly to review the leading facts.

The settlers had withdrawn from a land of plenty to a wilderness; and had certainly earned by their suffering, whatever rights they intended to secure by their flight. That, which was most prized, consisted in the liberty to form such a system of government for themselves as they approved. They were a weak minority, and therefore still liable to restraint from the mother country. They began this government with a view to obtain a home for their principles, where such as held them might hope for permanent shelter and security. Aware of danger, they labored to secure themselves, by taking every precaution to repel it. It was their anxious desire to live alone. A single and a chosen sect, in a spot which they had sacrificed every thing to reach, and where they molested none, they desired also to be free from molestation. They sought for none of different sentiments—why should such come among them? They had taken infinite pains to build up a system valuable to them, as well from the hardships they had undergone to attain it, as from their conviction of its intrinsic excellence. Can we in conscience call it either unnatural or unreasonable, that they should wish to uphold it, or feel jealousy of any act, having the least tendency to affect its stability?

The government they did establish, was a curious union of Church and State. It was framed avowedly upon the Scriptures, and instead of the more common arrangement, the civil was made in a degree subordinate to the ecclesiastical law. Mr. Cotton, in his letter to Lord Say and Seal, strongly justifies this course, which he thus explains: ‘It is better that the Commonwealth be fashioned to the setting forth God’s house, which is his Church, than to accommodate the Church-frame to the civil state.’ Such doctrine has passed away from among us.

Experience has proved the beneficial effects of a total separation. But in 1636, when this letter was dated, it had not. Where were our fathers to learn the practicability of a separation, even had they wished to adopt it? Were they to look for an example to the mother country, the one best known to them, and from which they had felt obliged to fly? Certainly not. Yet thence has come most of the reproach on this subject, although even at this advanced period, it wears in that quarter a particularly ill grace.

We maintain that the settlers, interfering with no one, and coming here for the purpose, had a clear *right* to establish such a government as they wished; and that having established it, they were fully justified in taking all lawful means to make it durable. It is no great matter whether the principles they worked upon were all abstractly right or not. It is sufficient, if they were fully understood and practically used to a good purpose. For instance, we have already stated, that the maxims of civil and church law were so interwoven in the frame, and so equally necessary to the support of the system, that in that early hour, all attacks upon the latter were in effect attacks upon all the civil institutions, and endangered the permanency of the whole fabric. Now this union may in the outset have been abstractly wrong; yet when once established, the only course was to preserve it against violence; for the risk of injury from change at that moment, would have been greater than the probable amount of good to be gained from recognising the true principle. Moreover, it must ever be remembered, that the system was particularly exposed to attack from within as well as from without. The age was turbulent. The foundations of the old systems of society had been every where shaken by the reformation; among these settlers in a new country they had been entirely destroyed. Religious enthusiasts themselves, they were exposed to the extravagance of all, who losing sight of common sense, sought in the visions of their own heated imaginations for schemes, which might dazzle for a time, but would certainly end in general ruin. It is wonderful how closely our ancestors noted this. Their design was to build up—and aware how little it would take at first to put every thing into irretrievable confusion, they held a strong curb over the unruly members of their society. This was clearly the dictate of prudence and common sense; and to this care they doubtless owed their preservation. This striking and justifiable motive may be seen in all the acts most frequently cited against them.

The first step, taken by the settlers under the Massachusetts Charter, was to form a Church. It seems a circumstance worthy of remark, and not unfavorable to our reasoning, that among so large a number, many of whom had never before seen each other, and notwithstanding the differences in speculative points, which certainly did exist among the Dissenters, the system adopted should have met with the assent of all but two persons ; a fact which can only be accounted for, by supposing a willing compromise of minor matters to secure the great end, their general safety. But the two who disagreed were members of the Council, and leading men. Not content with mere difference of opinion, they set up a separate society, which began to draw off some, and they openly encouraged a division, likely at that moment to have been fatal to the Colony. In reading the account of these Browns, in noticing the unfriendly character of all their operations, one can scarce avoid the idea, that they came as wolves in sheep's clothing, that their end was not what it seemed,—at all events, the worst enemies of the settlements would not have proceeded more effectually—but their operations were quickly checked. They were called before the Governor, and it being proved that their conduct '*tended* to sedition,*' they were quietly sent back to England. No measures were taken against their followers, who remained wholly unmolested. This mild proceeding would seem to need little justification, yet it is the first great case of intolerance.

We almost fear to approach the character of Roger Williams, so warmly have his admirers urged his claims to excellence ; yet, we hardly presume that any one, upon reflection, could be found to approve his course at Salem. His religious opinions were wild, beyond even the tone of the age, and he supported them in a manner so violent, that it could scarcely fail of being offensive to the community. His seems to have been a character, not very uncommon in the world ; jealous of authority, and irritated by opposition. He became violent and restless, acting with a spirit likely to produce nothing but discord and violence. It was in vain, that Cotton and Hooker, the mildest of the clergy, were sent to expostulate with him, and explain the consequences of his course ; their reasoning only furnished fuel to his opposition. In this state of things, the Government,

* Hutchinson, vol. i. p. 19.

deeming his conduct dangerous to the best interests of the State, felt compelled to order him to leave it. Peace soon returned, and two communities flourished where one might have lingered in helpless confusion. Age mellowed the feelings of Williams, and no inducement to violence existed at Providence. He lived in amity with Massachusetts, from which he afterwards had himself occasion for aid; and he established in his own settlement the admirable maxim of toleration, which will preserve his memory long after his extravagance shall be forgotten. Such is the second instance of intolerance, in which we can see nothing but the dictate of a wise and even of a mild policy.

The most violent dissension which took place in Massachusetts was occasioned by a woman, who succeeded in splitting the colony into parties. The history of Mrs. Hutchinson most strongly exhibits the peculiar dangers to which the settlement was at that day exposed. Some, though perhaps not her immediate partisans, entertained opinions injurious both to morality and good government, and these were disseminated among the people with greater ease under the cover of her peculiar doctrines. The struggle, not confined to argument, assumed a more serious shape. Every nerve was exerted to operate upon the political body. An election manifested the good sense of the majority, in the choice of Winthrop; and, as Hutchinson correctly observes, 'prevented and turned the ruin from the country upon Mrs. Hutchinson and many of her family and friends. These were decided to have pursued a course tending* to disturb the civil peace, and were accordingly banished. Many of them, learning moderation in exile, desired to return, were received without difficulty, and subsequently became valuable members of the society, whose safety they had once endangered. This forms the third and the most noted instance.

Hitherto nothing appears to us to have occurred calculated to affect the character of the Puritans; unless one would quarrel with them for preserving, what they had a manifest right to preserve, the safety and success of their particular design in establishing the colony. We have tried to show that in all these cases, they had in their situation strong causes of justification, which may not apply to firmly established communities. After all, then, the persecution of the Quakers is the only thing which

* Hutchinson's Hist. p. 57, vol. i. Vol. ii. Appendix, No. 2. The Address of Winthrop to Mrs. H.

can be considered as authorizing any severity of remark. Even here, much may be said in their defence. In addition to the general reasoning already urged, there were causes for it growing out of the characters of those people. Persons at the present day, when reading of Quakers, and thinking of the very respectable and unoffending sect who now bear the name, feel a strong and natural indignation at what would seem unmerited suffering. They do not reflect that the persons who infested the colony in those days were of a very different character. They were ranters; extremely ignorant, fanatical, and incessant disturbers of the public peace. Much of what is told by the elder historians, would even at this period draw them under the cognizance of a magistrate. The church rites of our strict ancestors were rudely broken in upon, their moral sense grossly shocked, and their civil authority openly contemned. Under all these provocations their patience at last gave way, and finding banishment and stripes totally unavailing, they, in a fit of exasperation, made the offence capital. The measure was not, however, in accordance with the unanimous feeling of the Colony. The law enforcing the penalty, after having been once rejected, subsequently passed by a majority of a single vote, and the public sympathy excited for the sufferers became so great, that it was continued only for the year.

We say nothing of the law retaining all civil rights in the hands of church members, because this principle appeared too clearly to result from the necessity of self-defence, to require argument, and because any thing we might have wished to say has been anticipated by the clear and convincing manner in which Mr. Quincy has lately treated that part of the subject.

But it may be said, that, admitting the Puritans to have been actuated by this attention to their own preservation, their course manifested only an unreasonable fear of danger, and a deficiency in judgment—that the true policy is, to leave errors to consume themselves, and not to furnish them with fuel by immediate opposition or restraint—that these are the natural humors of every political body, which must have their way, or a sudden check may throw them in upon its vital parts. We freely allow this to be excellent reasoning in ordinary cases, but the situation of the Puritans was not an ordinary one. They came here a minority still exposed to the attack of the majority on the other side of the water. The power of the British Government was always leaning against them, the agents of Episcopacy were

among them, besides the members of milder sects, who were constantly operating to lead their people astray. We are aware that the examples of Roger Williams, William Penn, and Lord Baltimore, will be urged against us; but we think that these instances serve only to prove our position. It is very certain, that they adopted the correct doctrine to its fullest extent; but so unprepared for it was the age, that Williams was compelled to call upon Massachusetts to apprehend Gorton, after flogging and banishing him to no purpose; that George Keith was tried, found guilty, and fined in Pennsylvania for 'creating a schism;' and, most of all, that the Catholics were actually deprived of their religious liberty by the very individuals, to whom they in the days of their power had accorded indulgence. In other words, the very thing actually happened in Maryland, which the Puritans seem to some so unreasonably to have apprehended in Massachusetts.

Thus much has been said upon this most objectionable feature in the Puritan character, which is, however, somewhat less so than it has been commonly considered. In conclusion, we will only repeat our own conviction, that their great fault consisted in engrafting the civil upon the ecclesiastical power, and thus making the latter a necessary basis of the State; but the idea of the close union between them was a prevailing error, not of theirs, but of the age. Having once assumed this ground, they did not incur blame by using all proper means to defend it from attack; and, finally, they were not unreasonable in their apprehension of danger. Thus far, and no farther, do we admit the faults of the founders of New-England. Their enemies may make the most of it. Perhaps they were not faultless, but theirs was a lucky fate. The evil of their day died with them, the good will remain forever. Singularly happy that community, in which a difficulty of this kind has, without any violent revolution, cured itself so effectually as to leave no trace behind! General moral reflections may answer very well for such observers as praise or condemn by the mass, but he who looks closely into the nature of man, will find much to attribute to human imperfection, without carrying every doubtful case to the account of his worst passions.

We now leave this topic for the purpose of resuming the examination of the principles, which sustained the settlement, and the influence it has exerted upon the present time. It will thus be seen at a glance, that the unity in design was pre-

served in the execution, and remains now in its results, the beautiful fabric of our existing institutions. Our limits warn us to be brief.

The legislation of the early Colony tended chiefly to three distinct objects.

1°. The first was the cultivation of piety and good morals. The settlers had hardly arrived in Massachusetts, before they set about the frame of their Church. After solemn deliberation, they entered into a formal covenant, 'that they would live in the fear of God, and walk in His ways, that they would cultivate watchfulness and tenderness in their mutual intercourse; in all cases of offence, bear and forbear, give and forgive; in their intercourse with mankind, study a conversation remote from the very appearance of evil; by obeying dutifully all who should be set over them, encourage them to perform their duty; and, by shunning idleness, approve themselves in their particular callings, the servants of God.' Such, it should be ever remembered, was the tenor of the voluntary bond of a people!

The laws which were framed, bore accordingly more the impress of a system of moral duties, than of the mere negative rules of ordinary civil societies; and though this has subjected them to many sneers, we cannot help respecting the exalted nature of the feelings, which prompted the course, however impracticable it may be in its application to men. These laws, not content with punishing grosser offences, were directed against many vices usually considered beyond the reach of the civil arm. Dancing in ordinaries, dressing beyond the degree of one's fortune, intemperance, idleness, lying and swearing, were all punishable offences. The penalties were graduated by the enormity of the *moral* crime. This may be illustrated by the law of Plymouth, punishing adultery and blasphemy by death, while forgery incurred only a fine; and by the general rule established in Massachusetts, that 'when the customs of the Commonwealth were found defective, the crime shall be decided by the word of God.'

Experience has proved, that it is not possible to extend civil authority over offences purely against good morals; it must be restricted to injuries done to society. Man is too fallible to admit a rule more rigid. But we cannot condemn, or rather, we ought to admire the noble spirit of those individuals, which induced the attempt to raise the character of their

people to a standard of such extraordinary purity. Even the aim was not without its practical benefit. In all human exertion, nothing is lost by raising the standard to be arrived at. The higher that of moral excellence is in a community, the higher will be its general tone of language and feeling, though the whole end may not be attained. Moreover, the influence of this attempt has been good in another view. Though the law ceased to be executed, yet most of the offences continued to retain the stigma affixed to them, in the minds of the people. No doubt they were, are, and will be committed to some extent, here as every where else; but a great deal is gained to morality, if the prevailing sentiment be such as to make indulgence in such vices a never failing cause of degradation in the public esteem, if it be such as to hold out encouragement to the practice of the opposite virtues, such as to throw the whole mass of coarser faults into the most degraded and outcast class of beings, where vice has no splendor to gild its deformity, nor cloak to cover its nakedness.

2°. The second object was the dissemination of knowledge. One of the early laws enjoined upon all parents, to instruct and catechise their children and servants; and the Selectmen of each town were directed to remove the latter from their authority, and commit the charge of them to fitter hands, if they were found deficient. This is a rule in itself excellent, but, from the nature of things, difficult to be enforced. We find the neglect of it repeatedly noticed in the early times, as a lamentable thing, likely to bring down the judgment of heaven. Soon after the Colony arrived,* and at a time when they might still be supposed to entertain no ideas but those of immediate preservation, this portion of a sect of Christians, who have collectively been charged with hostility to all learning, voted, in full meeting, a sum of four hundred pounds, to establish a school at Newtown. This foundation having been enlarged two years afterwards, by a devise of eight hundred

* Mr. Grahame has fallen into an error here, by copying Mather's *Magnalia*, which assigns 1630, the very year of their arrival, as the date of this proceeding; and Mr. Neale has fallen into the same mistake. The latter goes so far as to name the day in that year, the sixth of September. But besides the obvious improbability of so early a period, and the authority of Hubbard, any doubt upon it has been put at rest by the research of Mr. Savage, the indefatigable Editor of *Winthrop's Journal*, Vol. ii. p. 87. Note. The true date is 1636.

pounds from a private individual, grew into a College, perpetuating its benefactor's reputation by assuming the name of Harvard. The establishment continued to experience the protection of the Government, and, in 1642 and 1650, was remodelled, with increased privileges. Indeed, throughout the early annals, striking facts occur, to show that this institution was a great favorite with the people.

But a single College, however patronized, would have done little to spread among the mass of the common population the principles of knowledge. It is instruction in simple and elementary matters, carried to the home of each individual, which alone can make a whole nation advance in intelligence. The plan best adapted to bring about this end, is entitled to much more attention than all the high sounding theories ever started. It would be hazarding little to say, that the system established by our fathers does very completely answer the purpose. That system was instituted by the law, obliging every town with fifty householders, to provide a school-master qualified to teach reading and writing. If it had one hundred, it was then bound to maintain a grammar school. The practical success of this regulation may be seen in the fact, that there are few natives of New-England, who have not received the rudiments of education; none who have not enjoyed the opportunity. It is a singular, but not unapt reflection of Mr. Webster, in his valuable Plymouth Address, that in the efforts for the dissemination of the means of instruction, made by Mr. Brougham in England, and by which he has gained so much reputation, we see no principles with which we are not familiar from early life, and which have not been established ever since the infancy of this people.

3°. The third and last great object was the security of individual liberty. This may be seen in the first act of the settlers; it may be traced with unerring certainty in all their subsequent proceedings. They would not come at all, unless the Charter which governed them came also; a decision which has shocked the feelings of British historians most grievously, but upon which the young American cannot ponder too deeply; for it is the corner stone of our liberty. Mr. Chalmers tells the truth, because he thinks it a matter of reproach, but we hope it will be long before any one here will be ashamed of it. Having established themselves on the most secure footing they could gain in America, they formed a

Government of a very primitive kind—every freeman having a voice in public affairs. When the number had increased and extended so widely over the country as no longer to admit of this arrangement, the principle of representation arose like a regular consequence of a digested scheme. The first meeting of Delegates pursued the same course, by laying down the fundamental rules, that no law should be passed, no tax imposed, and no officer appointed or removed in the Colony, without their consent. These were accompanied by others, exhibiting a jealousy of encroachment upon their rights, by the Governor and Council, which shows how clearly they understood them. The system was further improved, a few years afterwards, by the division of the legislative power into two branches, the one composed of the Governor and Assistants, the other the popular branch; and finally, by that confederacy between Massachusetts, New-Haven, Connecticut and Plymouth, in whose regulations may clearly be seen the germ of our present national system. Yet, with all these improvements, the primitive habits were still closely adhered to in the towns; and the people have invariably manifested aversion to change. All matters of interest are thus submitted to the popular will in town meeting, and abide by the decision of the majority. Such was the system established in former days, and such it is now;—a system which gives to each member of society his proper importance, and secures a hardy independence of character in the yeomanry, very different from the sickly servility, and fawning adulation, paid to the upper classes by the peasantry of older countries.

We have thus very imperfectly attempted to explain the great principles of the Puritans by their measures. We omit an examination of less essential points, not because they want interest, but from the nature of our plan, which excluded secondary matters. Yet the simple course of public justice would alone afford a subject for curious and instructive reflection. No professional man can help being struck with the difference between our system and that of England, whenever he examines a book of British law. Our practice with regard to real actions, conveyancing, and pleading, is the light of day, compared with the obscurity existing in the mother country,—not to speak of the organization of our Courts, and the whole criminal code. But to general readers, this is a matter of inferior interest.

It has been our endeavor to explain the motives which brought the Pilgrims here, and the principles which built up their society. We have seen unity in design, and unity in execution. The motives which brought them have been shown to be,—1. Attachment to religious belief; 2. Regard for the character of their children; 3. Love of the good institutions of their native country. The principles acted upon have been shown to be the clear consequences of these. 1. The cultivation of piety and good morals; 2. The dissemination of knowledge; 3. The security of individual liberty. And now, we boldly challenge the world, to produce any instance where these ideas have been more perfectly conceived, and fully executed. It may be true, that more was attempted than could be performed. This is surely not a fault, as some superficial persons have believed;—if a defect, it lies at the root of all the failures of man, his nature—which will not carry him beyond a certain point. What was actually effected, may be seen in the present privileges of the people, in their moral, industrious and frugal habits, in the degree of their intelligence, and above all, in their sturdy, but not overbearing independence. This is the influence which the character of the Puritan settlers has exerted upon the present generation; these are the benefits which their posterity derive from them.

But if we wish them to be permanent, it is not enough to look to the past; we must consider the future, and apply the lesson we have thus been taught. We should all recollect the old and excellent motto, that ‘it is not with us as with other men, whom *small things* can discourage.’* It is incumbent upon each person to consider, that he exerts a direct influence upon the State; and that it is only by acting on the principles which lie at the bottom of the system, adhering to piety and good morals, extending the desire for instruction, and maintaining personal independence, which can grow only out of individual industry, temperance and frugality, that he can hope to see it endure. By pondering upon these things, and turning them to account in his daily practice, he will benefit himself, and through himself the whole country.

* Hazard's St. P. Vol. I. p. 363.